

Sept.29th 2008 Minutes : Facilitation of Community Choices Committee

The Committee met in the Town Room, Town Hall. The special meeting was called to order at 9:00

Members Present, Stan Gawle, Katherine Vorwerk- Feldman , Richard Spurgin , Alison Donta- Venman, Martha Hanner , Bob Saul ,Irvin Rhodes and Joan Golowich

Members Absent : Gerald Jolly, Isaac Ben-Ezra

Others Present : John Musante and Andy Steinberg

Questionnaire: There was considerable discussion on the ranking instructions outlined in question 6. On a motion by Richard Spurgin and a second by Irvin Rhodes, it was agreed to use a 1-6 choice ranking and to add Jones library as a place to drop off questionnaires.

Presentation slide 7: Bob reviewed new language regarding Proposition 2.5 in response to Stan Gawle's request to add 1.5% average new growth in addition to the 2.5% allowed for a total of 4%.

The language was as follows:

Massachusetts communities are limited to how much they can increase local property taxes by 2 and a half.%. Proposition 2 and a half allows for an annual increase in property taxes of 2.5% plus any new growth in taxable property such as new construction/and or additions.

A new bullet: Amherst has averaged 1.5% per year during the past 10 years for a total average increase of 4% in the tax base.

Property taxes comprise approximately 57% of Amherst's revenue . A 4% increase in the property tax levy translates into a 2.2% increase in the overall revenue.

On a motion by Katherine Vorwerk Feldman and a second by Alison Donta Venman, the committee approved the language change and additional bullet language.

Presentation Language: Martha Hanner suggested that we need to include information in our presentation that our information was developed prior to the

new economic events having taken place. After considerable discussion , members were in agreement not to have a separate slide but that additional language would be incorporated into the existing state aid slide and narrative portion dealing the income tax referendum and possible deeper cuts in state aid.

FAQ Presentation: Richard Spurgin agreed to handle the questions posed at the meeting.

Handout material : On a motion by Bob saul and a second by Alison Donta Venman, the committee unanimously approved the handout material package.

On - Line Survey costs: Alison Donta Venman explained that the 2 month cost for the on-line syrvey would be approximately \$40.00. John Musante indicated that the Town would cover those costs.

Master Calendar: Joan Golowich passed out a tentative presentation schedule.I rv Rhodes noted that the October 8th Crocker Farms hadn't been confirmed. The revised calendar will be posted by Tuesday.

Post October 2nd meeting: It was agreed that the committee would meet on October 6th at 9:AM

Meeting adjourned at 10:05